



**Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
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TWO FLORIDIANS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR TRANSPORTING TWO TONS OF MARIJUANA

McALLEN, TX – Concepcion A. Acosta, 63, of Miami, Florida, and Caesar A. Rodriguez, 45, of Orlando, Florida, were sentenced to lengthy prison terms for transporting two tons of marijuana, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today. At a sentencing hearing on the afternoon of April 25, 2006, United States District Judge Randy Crane ordered Acosta to serve 15 years (180 months) in federal prison. Rodriguez was sentenced to 12 years (144 months) in prison. There is no parole in the federal system.

Acosta and Rodriguez, who were charged with possession with intent to distribute more than 4,800 pounds of marijuana found hidden under a load of papaya in a tractor trailer owned by Acosta and driven by Rodriguez, were convicted by a jury's verdict in February 2006.

The jury's verdict came after three days of testimony and two days of deliberation. During trial, the United States presented testimony that proved that on June 10, 2005, investigating agents noticed suspicious activity around the refrigerated trailer of an Allways Freightways, Inc. tractor trailer. Allways Freightways, Inc. is a company doing business out of Miami, Florida. The driver of the tractor trailer, later identified as Caesar Rodriguez, was observed by investigating agents driving the vehicle south toward a convenience store in McAllen, where a new driver assumed the wheel and Rodriguez remained. The tractor trailer was later driven by the unidentified individual to a plastics warehouse in McAllen, Texas, where the trailer was backed into a loading dock, and then driven back to the convenience store and delivered to Rodriguez. After one stop at a Motel 6, in Edinburg, TX, Rodriguez headed north on Highway 281 in the tractor trailer. Rodriguez was later found to be accompanied by a passenger, Concepcion A. Acosta, who was later identified as the owner of the tractor trailer.

DPS officers approached the tractor trailer and its occupants while it was at a truck stop north of Edinburg, Texas, and were given permission to search the vehicle. Agents discovered 4,831 pounds of marijuana hidden among a load of papaya in the refrigerated trailer. In addition to contraband, investigating officers found \$28,000 in cash wrapped in rubber bands in Acosta's possession. Rodriguez was found in possession of a little more than \$4,000 similarly wrapped. Both men were taken into custody following the discoveries.

Officials testified that following his arrest Acosta admitted that he had made arrangements to transport the illegal contraband to Florida in his own tractor trailer. At trial,

Acosta took the stand and denied having made the statement. Today, Judge Crane found Acosta had lied on the stand warranting an increase in his sentence.

Both men have been in federal custody without bond since the day of their arrest in June 2005, and will remain in custody pending their transfer to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to serve there lengthy sentences.

Judge Crane has further ordered both men to serve a five-year term of supervised release under the supervision of the United States Probation Office, upon being discharged from federal prison.

This case was investigated by Texas Department of Public Safety/Drug Enforcement Agency Task force officers, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Alex C. Lewis and James H. Sturgis.

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